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Society of the Cincinnati.

THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI was established at the close of the Revolutionary War, in May, 1783, by officers of the American army, just previous to its disbanding, in the cantonment at Newburgh, on the Hudson River.

It was designed to be a "Society of friends, to endure as long as they shall endure or any of their eldest male posterity, and in failure thereof, the collateral branches who may be judged worthy of becoming its supporters and members."

It was founded on certain "immutable principles," viz., to preserve inviolate the rights and liberties secured by the war, to promote and cherish union and national honor between the States, to render permanent the cordial affection subsisting among the officers, and especially to assist such officers, or their families, as might be in need.

The Society was divided into State Societies.

All officers of the American army, who had resigned with honor, after three years' service in the capacity of officers, or who had been deranged by the resolutions of Congress, upon the several reforms of the army, or who had continued to the end of the war, were entitled to become parties to this institution, on subscribing one month's pay, and signing their names to the general rules in their respective State societies; and the "eldest male branches" of such officers as had died in the service were also entitled to membership on the same terms as children of actual members. A limited number of honorary members might also be admitted.

By virtue of resolutions adopted in 1854 and 1856, each State Society has now the right to regulate the terms and qualifications for the admission of members, "provided, that admission be confined to the male descendants of original members (including collateral branches as contemplated by the original constitution); or to the male descendants of such officers of the army or navy as may have been entitled to admission, but who failed to avail themselves thereof, within the time limited by the constitution; or to the male descendants of such officers of the army or navy of the Revolution as may have resigned with honor, or left the service with reputation; or to the male collateral relative of any officer who died in service without leaving issue."

The male descendants of those who were members of State societies which have dissolved may also be admitted into existing societies, on such terms as those societies may prescribe.

The sum of \$700, by the present rules of the Massachusetts Society, is to be paid by each person admitted under the above rules, whose ancestor was not a member of the Society.

The Massachusetts Society was incorporated by Act of the Legislature in 1806. It holds an annual meeting at Boston on the 4th of July. Its business affairs are transacted by the Officers and a Standing Committee, who hold regular meetings in March and November of each year, at which times applications for membership are considered, and aid is voted to beneficiaries out of the income of the Society's fund.

BY-LAWS AND RULES

OF THE

Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati.

Originally adopted July 4th, 1811, and amended at the annual meetings of 1848, 1859, 1872, and 1877.

I. THE officers of the society shall consist of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and an assistant-secretary and treasurer, each of whom shall, in virtue of his office, be a member of the standing committee of the year.

II. There shall be annually elected, on the 4th of July, a committee consisting of twelve, in addition to the officers of the society, whose duty it shall be to take care of the general concerns of the corporation, as well as of all matters specially committed to them by the society. They shall from the funds afford such relief to the members, or to their widows and orphans, as in their judgment shall become proper objects thereof, in such sums, and at such times as they shall think best, taking care that the interest only of the general stock of the society be appropriated for this purpose, and for that of defraying the necessary expenses of the society. They shall pay a special attention to the state of the treasury, and shall see that the treasurer gives bond for the faithful discharge of his duty; they shall from time to time audit his accounts, direct him in the exchange or purchase of stock, and in whatever the interest and security of the corporation may from time to time require. They shall keep a record of their proceedings, which shall be subject to the inspection of any member, and at the annual meeting shall be laid before the society and read.

III. The votes for the election of the officers of the society, and for the admission of members, shall always be by ballot, or written vote.

IV. Five members of the standing committee shall be considered as a quorum for transacting the ordinary business; but no appropriation of money shall be made unless seven members be present.

V. Every original candidate, who shall be voted in, shall, at the time of his admission, pay such a sum in aid of the funds, as the standing committee shall adjudge to be reasonable.

VI. Every person who may be desirous of becoming a member of the society, and who shall come within the terms of the original general institution, shall make his application to the standing committee in writing; who shall advise thereon, and report their opinion to the society; but no one shall be permitted to be a candidate under the age of twenty-one years.

VII. Each person who shall be admitted a member in right of succession to a deceased member, or who shall become a member by virtue of any rule now existing or which may hereafter be established, shall make and subscribe the following declaration, in presence of the society :

I _____ having been admitted a member of the Society of Cincinnati within the State of Massachusetts, as the true successor of _____, late a member of this society, and my deceased (father or brother, as the case may be) do solemnly promise and engage that I will duly conform to all the regulations established from time to time for the government of said society, as far as they shall have for their basis the principles of the original institution. In testimony whereof, I hereto subscribe my name, and pledge my sacred honor.

VIII. New members, who shall be admitted on the claim of succession, shall have a diploma or certificate, signed by the president, and countersigned by the secretary, of the form following, viz :

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Be it known that _____ as the true successor of _____ deceased, is a member of the Society of the Cincinnati; instituted by the officers of the American Army, at the period of its dissolution, as well to commemorate the great event which gave independence to the United States of America, as for the laudable purpose of inculcating the duty of laying down, in peace, arms assumed for public defence, and of uniting in acts of brotherly affection and bonds of perpetual friendship, the members constituting the same.

In testimony whereof, the seal of the State Society of the Cincinnati of Massachusetts, is hereunto affixed, and the hand of the President, the day of _____ in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and _____

[SEAL.]

By order

President.

Secretary.

IX Any person, making application to become a member of the Society, in conformity with the Rule recommended at the Triennial meeting of the general Society of the Cincinnati, held at Baltimore, in May, 1854, and adopted by this Society at their annual meeting in July following, may be admitted, upon subscribing the usual declaration and upon condition of the payment of the sum of seven hundred (\$700.00) dollars to the Treasurer of the Society, as a contribution to the permanent fund, and shall thereby be entitled to all the rights and privileges of an original member.

X. The succession and admission to membership of this Society shall descend to the heir male, unless, for satisfactory reasons, another be chosen; in which case the membership shall extend to the life only of the person so elected, and, at his decease, the then existing heir male of the original member shall be the person first to be considered on a new election.

RULES REGARDING HONORARY MEMBERS.

Voted, That, in the election of honorary members, it is distinctly understood by the Society, that such election does not confer the right of an original member, or give an honorary member any title to any portion of the funds, nor are they entitled to vote, or eligible to any office.

Voted, That the admission of honorary members of the Cincinnati, for life only, shall be confined to those who shall be eminent lineal descendants or representatives of those who were distinguished by high military or civil virtues and services in the Revolutionary War.

Voted, That no person be admitted an honorary member of the Society, except upon recommendation of the Standing Committee.

APRIL, 1890.

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